# Adventures in Math

**Real-world math lessons + activities about money**

**Grades K–2**

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Visit [scholastic.com/regions](http://scholastic.com/regions) for an online Piggy Bank Quiz and family sheets.

**Use these materials as supplements when you teach:**

Math • Money • Financial literacy

For more free lessons and activities, visit [scholastic.com/extracredit](http://scholastic.com/extracredit).
Lesson | Money Basics

Why do we use money?

Objective
- Define “money”
- Discuss why we need money
- Identify bills and coins
- Consider how money is used

Time
60 Minutes

Materials
- One real $1 bill
- Play or real coins (two or three coins per student)
- Ways to Spend Money printable
- Piggy Bank Quiz (optional)

Part I — Vocabulary And Concept Development

1 Money and Value: Show students a real $1 bill. Ask them to describe what you are holding (a dollar, a bill, money, a piece of paper, etc.). Explain that in the United States we call this a dollar bill. Ask them if a dollar bill could be used as a bookmark or to make a paper airplane. Then ask them what else the dollar could be used for. Lead the class to the idea that the dollar bill has value and that we can use the dollar bill for something that we need or want. Pair off students and ask them to share with the students sitting closest to them their experiences observing other people (like their parents) using money to purchase things they want or need. Then ask them to share with one another their own ideas about how they would spend $1.

2 Bills and Coins: Have students name different types of money. Make a list of their responses. Identify each response as a bill or coin. Note: Some students may identify names of foreign currency. Accept those responses, but ultimately lead students to the understanding that money can generally be divided into two groups: bills and coins. Emphasize that both bills and coins have value and are used to purchase things that we need or want.

Part II — The Value Of Money

Activity — Who Has the Most?

Students will compare amounts of money.

Preparation: Each student in the class will receive an envelope that contains two random coins that you have placed in the envelopes prior to the lesson. The coins can be the same or different. The difficulty of this activity can be adjusted by limiting the number of types of coins that are used. For example, you may want to use only pennies and nickels in the envelopes, or you may want to use all types of coins including half-dollars.

Activity: Divide the class into small groups of three to four students. Pass out the envelopes containing the coins.

Part III — Why We Need Money

Ask students if they have ever traded something with someone else to get something they wanted. For example, maybe they traded a school snack for a plastic dinosaur, or a piece of Halloween candy for another piece of candy they preferred. Tell students that trading (also known as bartering) was the main system that people used many years ago to get things that they needed or wanted. Trading is still used today for some things, but paper money and coins have generally replaced the trading system.

Explain to students that when we use money to get the things we want and need, we categorize these things into either goods or services. Have students discover the difference between goods and services with the following activity.

Activity — Goods or Services

Students will decide if a purchase is a good or a service.

Preparation: Make one copy of the Ways to Spend Money activity sheet for each group and cut the eight pictures apart and paper clip them together.

Activity: Divide the class into groups of three to four students. Give each group one set of pictures from the Ways to Spend Money activity sheet. Have students in each group spread out their sets of pictures. Tell students that these are things that cost money. The pictures show two different ways to spend money: goods

BONUS
- Encourage students to take the Piggy Bank Quiz to examine how they use their money. Are they Squirrel-Away Squirrels, Do-Good Dolphins, or Spendy Spiders?
and services. Goods are things that we buy to keep or use, like a dozen eggs, a bicycle, or a toothbrush. Goods are usually things that we can touch. Services are things that are done for us, like a train ride to visit your grandparents or when you go somewhere you need to buy tickets to get into, like an amusement park. Challenge students to work together in their groups to separate the pictures into two groups—goods and services.

To increase the challenge of this activity, do not define “goods” and “services” prior to having the students divide the pictures into two groups. Tell them only that the pictures represent ways that we can spend money, and have the groups work together to separate those ways into two groups.

**Answers:**

**PART IV—Where Money Comes From**
Ask students how people get money. Make a list of their ideas. Most people earn money from their jobs. Have each student name and briefly act out a type of job that he or she might like to do each day.
WAYS TO SPEND MONEY

- Riding a merry-go-round
- Buying a bicycle
- Getting a haircut
- Buying sneakers
- Buying books
- Buying a movie ticket
- Buying food
- Going to the dentist
FORMAS DE USAR EL DINERO

Subir a un carrusel  
Comprar una bicicleta

Cortarse el cabello  
Comprar zapatillas

Comprar libros  
Comprar una entrada de cine

Comprar comida  
Ir al dentista
Lesson | Money Planning

What can we do with money?

Objective
• Identify ways that money can be used: spending, saving, and giving

Time
60 Minutes

Materials
• Construction paper
• Don’t Lose Your Money! printable
• Three different colors of sticky notes

PART I—Spending Money
Review with students the idea that money can be used to buy goods and services. Some of those goods and services are things that we need and some of those things are things that we want, but don’t really need.

Ask students to name things that we need that cost money, such as food, clothes, housing, and electricity. Make a list of the students’ responses. Then ask the students what would happen if their parents or guardians used all their money to buy video games and didn’t pay for the things that their family needed.

Emphasize the idea that planning helps us use our money wisely, so that we have enough to pay for what we need first, and then for what we want later on.

Give each student a sheet of construction paper. On one side of the paper have them write the word “NEED” and on the other side write the word “WANT.” Divide the class into groups of three to four students. Then read the following list of goods and services one at a time. Have students decide if each item is a need or something that they want but don’t really need, and ask them to write down their answers on the piece of construction paper. Have them show their answers to the other members of their group to see if they all agree. Discuss their responses as needed.

LIST: clothing, vacation, food, water, surfboard, place to live, karate lessons, shoes, teddy bear

Tara and her grandmother oohed and aahed over the delightful little box. Tara thought it would be the perfect place to store her treasures.

That night, Tara put three of her most beautiful seashells into the little box and kept the box tucked safely beneath her bed. The next day, Tara opened the box to admire her seashells. When she opened the box, she made an exciting discovery! The box was still filled with her three beautiful seashells, but now there was another tiny sparkling seashell, as blue as the sky, tucked among the other shells! Tara was very excited to show her grandmother her new magical seashell. Tara’s grandmother was amazed.

That day, Tara and her grandmother again walked along the beach. Tara collected three more beautiful seashells. That night Tara put her new shells into the magical box and tucked it safely beneath her bed.

The next morning, Tara opened her magical box. Once again, the little box was still filled with Tara’s seashells, but now there were two sparkling blue seashells in the box as well!

For the rest of the summer, Tara kept adding seashells to her box. And every time she did, another sparkling blue seashell was there the next morning. By the end of the summer, the little box was so full of seashells that Tara couldn’t close the box. Tara used some of the seashells to make a picture frame for her grandmother to thank her for a wonderful summer.

Tara took her magical box with her when she went back home to the big city. It was still filled with her collection of precious seashells. The summer magic seemed to be gone, but the little box was full of memories of a very magical summer.

Ask your students the following questions about the story:
• What seemed to be magical about Tara’s silver box?

PART II—Saving Money
Read the following short story aloud to your students:

Tara, a little girl who lived in a big city, was spending the summer with her grandmother. Her grandmother lived in a little pink-and-white house close to the beach. One day, Tara and her grandmother were collecting seashells on the beach when Tara discovered a small silver box tucked in the sand beneath a shiny seashell. The lid of the box was covered in tiny blue jewels in the shape of a starfish (sea star).

Tara took her magical box with her when she went back home to the big city. It was still filled with her collection of precious seashells. The summer magic seemed to be gone, but the little box was full of memories of a very magical summer.
What happened every time Tara added more seashells to the box?
How did Tara use the seashells to thank her grandmother?

Ask students why they think saving money is a good idea. Ask them if they have ever saved money. If so, why? Then ask if any of them save money in a jar or a piggy bank. Tell your students that putting money in a special place is like Tara putting her seashells in her magical silver box. She put the seashells in the magical box to protect them. Many adults and kids put money (and sometimes other valuables) into a bank—like the one in town—after they outgrow their piggy bank to protect their money. And while banks aren’t magical, banks can protect our money. When we save our money in a bank for a long period of time (like Tara saved her seashells) that money can earn more money from the bank (similar to the sparkling blue seashells that Tara found in her magical box) just for leaving it there and not taking it out of the bank to spend it. (The money that is earned is called interest.)

Pass out a copy of the Don’t Lose Your Money! activity sheet to each student. Have the students work together in small groups to complete the student worksheet. Assist and guide as needed. Review the correct answers together as a whole class.

Answers for the “Don’t Lose Your Money!” activity sheet: purse, bank, wallet, money jar, piggy bank.

PART III—Giving Money
Ask students to give examples of how they have helped someone else. Then ask students how money can be used to help others. List their responses.

Activity—Giving
Divide the class into groups of two to three students. Tell them to pretend that as a group they have $10 to help others. Together they must decide how to use the money. After the students have had time to discuss their ideas, have one member of each group share with the rest of the class how each group would use its $10.

PART IV—Spending, Saving, And Giving
Activity—Spend, Save, Give
Students will construct a pictograph to learn that how they choose to spend, save, and give their money has consequences.

Use the board or an empty wall to create the following pictograph. Label the pictograph as follows:

- Spend
  - popcorn
  - bicycle
- Save
  - doll
  - animal shelter
- Give
  - food bank
  - children’s hospital
  - video game

Give each student three sticky notes. Tell students that the sticky notes represent money they can use to spend, save, or give in any way they want. Have students write their initials on each sticky note.

Tell them to spend their sticky notes within any category they want—spend, save, and give. Once students have spent their sticky notes, discuss the results with the whole class, paying special attention to the consequence of their choices.

Allow the students to come to the board or empty wall and look at how others used their money. Ask the students to make their own observations about the consequences of their own choices as well as their classmates’ choices.

Remove the sticky notes and have students repeat the exercise. This time give each student three different-colored sticky notes.

Tell the students that the sticky notes represent money. They have one sticky note to spend, one to save, and one to give. Have students begin with the first color of sticky notes, for example, yellow. Tell them to spend the yellow sticky note on one of the three choices given: popcorn, glow stick, or puzzle. Have them add their yellow sticky notes to the pictograph. Designate colors for saving and giving, and then repeat the process for those categories. Discuss the results with the whole class.
DON’T LOSE YOUR MONEY!

Directions: Circle the places where people might put their money so they don’t lose it.

- purse
- garbage can
- bank
- refrigerator
- money jar
- wallet
- piggy bank
- washing machine
- fireplace
Objective
• Classify everyday merchandise and activities as wants or needs.
• Learn about an economy (the activities and transactions related to the production and distribution of goods and services in a particular geographic region. This includes the costs of raw goods, manufacturing, labor, transportation, and distribution. An economy also includes the trade of monetary resources in exchange for the purchase of such goods and services).

PREP
• Teacher-created picture and/or word cards of various items and activities that can be purchased, such as: shoes, snacks, toys, T-shirts, an amusement park ticket, balloons, a pet, a plate of food, milk, and/or a house. One set of cards for each group of three to four students.
• Advertising circulars from newspapers, an ad from a magazine or coupon book. Several ads from any of these sources for each group of three to four students.
• Crayons or markers.
• Teacher-created name cards for each student with the name of a business (e.g., “Jacob’s Jewelry Store”) or charitable organization (like the Animal Welfare Society). Businesses should include a variety of small-town businesses, such as: grocery store, bakery, ice cream shop, amusement park, bowling alley, movie theater, clothing store, sporting goods store, candy shop, doctor’s office, dentist, toy store, computer store, or cell phone store. Name tags can be made out of construction paper or tagboard with a string attached so that students can wear them around their necks.
• A paper cup for each student. This will be their “cash register.”
• Approximately 20 tokens for each student. These will represent the merchandise or service for each business or receipt for each charitable donation. Tokens can be simple pieces of colored construction paper or more elaborate shapes to represent the products being sold by the business. Important: Use three different color tokens; one color for businesses that are generally considered wants, a different color for businesses that are generally considered needs, and a third color for charitable organizations that would be under the heading share.
• Five pennies for each student. This is their starting cash.
• A small plastic bag for each student to hold the pennies; these are the students’ “wallets.”

BONUS
• Encourage students to take the Piggy Bank Quiz to examine how they use their money. Are they Squirrel-Away Squirrels, Do-Good Dolphins, or Spendy Spiders?
• If they took the quiz in the previous lesson, invite them to see if their results have changed.

“Things That We Want.”

Brainstorm: Without discussing the merit of any ideas, ask the students to explain the differences between things that we need and things that we want.

Then divide the class into small groups of three to four students. Give each group a set of the picture/word cards that identify items and activities that can be purchased.

Tell the groups that together they must sort the items/activities into two lists: one list should include things that we need to live and the other list should include things that we may want, but don’t necessarily need to live.

Encourage them to discuss why each item falls under one list or the other.

After the groups have had sufficient time to sort the cards, together as a class, identify the items/activities that belong on either the need or want list. Ask the students to justify their reasoning for the classification of each item. List the items on the board under the appropriate heading.

Next give each small group product ads gathered from any of the above sources (store circular, magazine, or coupon book). Also give each group a crayon or marker. Tell the students that it is the goal of each group to select three or four items in the advertising circular or from the other ad sources that people may want to buy but don’t really need to live. Each member of the group should circle one item in the advertising circular and/or select one product ad from a magazine or coupon book, but all members of the group should agree that the product selected is a want rather than a need.

After the groups have had sufficient time to circle and select the items, ask them to name the items that they have selected. Add the items to the want list on the board. Discuss any differences of opinion that students may have with the choices that have been made.

Follow-up Questions:
• How did your group decide if the product...
**The Piggy Bank Quiz**

*How do you know whether to buy shoes or a toy? Is it a want or a need?*

**Guiding Questions:**

- What is the same about all of the items in each group that is listed on the board?
- If you were hungry, would it be wise to spend your money on food or a ticket to the movies with no money left over?
- If you needed new shoes, do you think it would be a good decision to buy shoes or a toy?
- If you had money left over after you bought your lunch at school, would it be a good choice to spend that money on a piece of fruit as an after-school snack?
- Can you name ways that your parents spend money on things that your family needs?
- Can you name ways that your parents spend money on things that your family wants, but may not need to live?

**PART 2—The Money Cycle**

Explain to the students that you will be setting up a make-believe business community in the classroom. In this pretend business community, people exchange money to buy goods and services. Remind them that some goods and services are wants and others are needs, as they learned in the previous lesson.

Let students know that they will each have the chance to pretend to be a local business or charitable organization owner as well as a spender.

After distributing the materials, guide them through the steps of the simulation.

1. **Have each business or organization owner tell the rest of the class if their business or organization represents a want or a need.**

2. **Have five students at a time become the “spenders.”** These students will go around to the other businesses and organizations and spend, share (donate), or decide to save their pennies. For each penny that a spender deposits into the business “cash register” (cup), the business owner will give the spender one token. The spenders should put the tokens into their plastic bag “wallets.”

3. **Students may spend or share all of their pennies or they may choose to spend some, share some, or save some.** However, tell students that the pennies that they spend, share, or save for future or larger purchases must include wants and needs. This will be indicated by the two different color tokens that the businesses give to the spenders.

4. **Repeat steps 2 and 3 with five other students until all students have become spenders.** Encourage the savers to spend some of their pennies on purchases or donate their pennies to a charitable organization. Encourage all students to consider saving some of their pennies.

5. **After all of the students have had a chance to be a spender, they may take the pennies from their “cash registers” and add them to their plastic bags to spend in the next round.** This represents the money that they earned from their businesses. (It is a possibility that a business receives no income. If that student did not save any pennies from the previous spending round, they will not have anything to spend in the next round. If this happens, use this as an opportunity to discuss with students the benefits of saving.)

6. **Repeat steps 2 to 5 for an additional two rounds of the simulation.**

7. **After completing three rounds of the simulation, tell the business owners to count how much money they have earned or received for their organization.** (The total number of pennies they have in their cash registers and their wallets.)

**Follow-up Questions:**

- How many pennies do you have in all?
- Count the tokens in your wallets. Did you buy more wants or more needs?
- Which businesses made the most money?
- Why do you think this happened?
- Which businesses made the least money?
- Why do you think this happened?
- If you saved some pennies, why did you save them?
- If you saved some pennies, how did that help you as a local business owner or spender?
- Which businesses did you like the best? Why?